

July 18, 2010

To Whom Concerned:

This letter is an appeal to ask that you support the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 235/S, 484) which would repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision.

I am a retired teacher, soon to be 71 years old, who adopted my then foster son about eleven years ago. He came to me with many past traumas and may always suffer from the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder that goes with this kind of background. I took retirement at age 60 in order to work less than full time as a teacher and spend more time with him, but became disabled two years ago from heart and lung disease. I am no longer able to work at all; however, I worked many years before teaching and during summers in jobs that contributed to the Social Security System, and I am fully vested in this program, with the required 40 quarters. I understand that this is not likely to help me directly at this time because of my teacher's retirement income.

My son will soon be 18 and has several years of school to complete before he would be able to hold any kind of significant job. Because of his disability, he may not be able to work regularly even when trained. It is likely that he would need the disability income that could be provided by my Social Security Credits.

Although I am disabled, I am not in danger of dying soon and the two of us will need to share my retirement income that was designed to support one person. This will be for the rest of my life. I may not be able to afford the kinds of services he needs or even the kind of schooling. We do not own our house and may be forced to find smaller and possibly inadequate living quarters---even as he reaches an age where he would normally be moving into a shared apartment with friends. My income may not be enough to support that. The emotional consequences can only add to his sense of depression and meaninglessness, contributing negatively to his disability.

Although I had offers from private schools, it was always my choice to work in the public school system, specializing in working with children in depressed poverty areas and in the field of special education. It doesn't seem fair to punish me for having given of myself in this way. I loved reaching out to these children and making a difference in their lives, but it was not my intent to sacrifice my own future and that of my child.

If the GPO and the WEP are repealed, he could receive SSDI based on my accumulated credits, allowing him to receive appropriate quality education and vocational training with the goal of his being able to support himself someday. He would be able to share an apartment with others, in keeping with his age and development. He could even go away to college if that works for him. Not to pass the Fairness Act is to keep us both in a condition of growing poverty and disability for the rest of our lives. My accumulated Social Security Credits, fairly and honestly earned, will do us no good.

If passed, the Social Security Fairness Act could make a dramatic difference in our lives, and I urge you to do whatever is necessary to see that it becomes a reality.

Sincerely,

Barbara Siler
CA